



A View of What We Do

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Although many people categorize the work we do as "body work", we do not view our approach this way. While it's true that we work with people who inhabit bodies, the physical instrument is not the sole focus.

What we mean by "body" includes: our thoughts, actions, moods, movement of ourself through space, the words we choose to speak, facial expressions, tone of voice, the amount of moving or stillness, our posture, how we sit and stand, all of these make up the person we are; the person we show to the world and ourselves.

Our organs need no thoughts from us to function. There is no need to tell our heart to pump blood or our lungs to expel or take in breath; the same goes for the stomach, liver, intestines, all of our internal organs. We never had to learn how to perform these actions. They were "hardwired" into our physiology.

However, our posture, physical actions, words, attitude, and mood, to name a few, are learned responses. They were not "hardwired". Most of these learned responses were imprinted in early childhood. They are what we show to the world as our personality or style. These learned responses are how we habitually take in and disperse information to ourselves and others.

At the core of what we teach is the belief that our thoughts and movements are so interconnected that it's hard, if not impossible to separate them.

As an easy example, when you see a person who is really happy, what are the outward physical signs that give you that message? Their smile; the way they gesture with their hands; something about the uplift and carriage of their upper body, particularly in their upper chest; the way they move as if not able to sit still; the tone or volume of their voice. All of these will tell you that person is happy and excited. Or in the language of movement, you can say their shape or posture has a front-and-up dynamic.

When you encounter someone who is very sad or depressed the outward physical signs are quite different. The person may be frowning or void of facial expression; they will be prone to sitting still and not moving much or gesturing; their chest will be sunken down and their words will be slowly spoken in a quiet voice. All of these will tell you that person is sad or depressed. In the language of movement you can say there is a strong front-and-down dynamic to their stance.

For someone new to this way of working, these explanations might seem trivial, but try to sit still with your chest sunk down. Don't move and say to yourself: "I am very happy" or say something good about yourself. It doesn't work. It can't because your shape is not able to hold those thoughts and feelings.

Now change your shape and lift up your chest, smile and gesture with your hands in an upward way. Say: "This is the most depressing day of my life". It doesn't work nor can it because that shape is not one that can hold those thoughts and feelings.

These two very simple examples show how it did not "feel right" when the words did not match the shape. As an example, this might seem trivial. Yet how many times during the day does a person pay attention to the shape they are holding or putting themselves in to observe how they are interacting and conveying their message to others?

Notice what shape you are holding yourself in as you read this. If you are sitting, how are you sitting? Is your jaw tight? Is your stomach tight? Are both of your feet on the ground? Are you holding your breath or breathing naturally or can you tell? Is your chest pulled in or down or is it filled with breath and held up? Are your shoulders lifted and trying to touch your ears? What is your facial expression like?

If any of these questions gave you in insight into your posture or the shape you hold yourself in, and you were able to change something about yourself, then you have begun.

The best thing you can do is know where your legs are, where your arms are and where your spine, head and breath are within the shape of your posture. This will have a great effect on your mood, your communication, your interaction with everyone, verbally and non-verbally.

Noticing how you shape, hold and move yourself through space so that you can achieve the desired effect from your interaction is the beginning place. If you can't tell where you are, you can't tell where the other person is or how they are going to affect you with their words, gestures and mood.